

THE PRESENT CASE OF THE Company of Shipwrights of England.

AFTER a deliberate and serious Consideration of the Company of Shipwrights of England's Proposals, and of the whole state of that Affair, with their Proceedings for many Years last past; In Obedience to Her Majesties Order in Council of the 4th of June, 1691. (Grounded upon the Petition of the Master Builders, and other skilful Master Shipwrights of England, wherein they prayed to renew their Ancient Charters, according to the Amendments in their Proposals annex'd to the said Petition.) The Right Honourable the Lords-Commissioners of the Admiralty having taken the Joynt Opinion of the Honourable the Commissioners of the Navy, and Corporation of the Trinity House of Deptford-Streand, made Report to His Majesty setting forth their Concurrence in the particular heads of the said Proposals; and that they had Considered the former and late Reports against the Interest of the said Company, and with Submission to the Orders of Council in Confirmation of them; It is for the good of Their Majesties Service, the benefit and advantage of the Shipwrights Trade in particular, and the Encouragement of Navigation in general, to have one entire Company of Shipwrights; and that agreeable to the ancient intent of Incorporating them, all of that Trade in England and Wales ought to be under the Rule and Government of the said Company, and their Deputies in the Out Ports, accordingly His Majesty in Council the Second of March 1691, is pleased to approve of the said Report; and to order that the Company of Shipwrights of England have leave to renew their Charter agreeable to the said Report, on the Additional heads of Amendments by them propos'd.

Which said Proposals so affirm'd to be for Their Majesties Service, the Benefit and Advantage of the Shipwrights Trade, and the Encouragement of Navigation, doth appear by the following Abstract.

That the Breed of Workmen at the Trade of a Shipwright will be much Improved by a Regular Company, (according to the first intent of Incorporating them) to Register their Apprentices and their Freedoms; and it is evident they being truly Qualified, will in Workmanship perform their Skilful Service, and deserve and earn their Wages much better than now they do.

That Shipwrights may be at ease, and follow their Trades with freedom as well in time of War as Peace, the said Company have Propos'd a method to supply Their Majesties Navy and Yard-Service, with Persons of that Trade Qualified for either, which is approved of; Provided, that if that Service be not supplied, either in respect to their number or quality, that then they may be liable to be Press'd by Admiralty-Warrants as now they are.

* That the General Rules for the firm and well building and Surveying of Ships and other Vessels, when properly settled, ought to be appeal'd unto, where disputes and differences arise, in Case of Mismeasurement, or unreasonable Articles in Contracts between the Owners and Builders (that oftentimes is unnecessary in the Works,) yet are obliged to submit to the Pre-

cedents of Persons unskill'd in Marine Architecture. And Ships or Vessels set up and Built by the Great for Common Sale, and Surveyed according to the Companies general Rules, such Ships or Vessels having to authentick Vouchers between the Buyer and Seller, will be esteemed more valuable, and much better accepted, (which said General Rules are approved of,) Provided, That at the Settlement of them, they advise with, and take the Joynt Opinion of the Master-Builders of their Majesties and Merchants Yards, ere they be Established and pass'd into a By-Law, and in regard the Master-Builders and other skilful Master Shipwrights of England, are often called and Summoned to attend the Surveys on old Ships and Vessels, and do spend much of their time therein both Afore and Aftore, such Surveys when required by the Master, Owners, or Freighters (is owned to be useful and absolutely necessary for the preservation of the Lives of their Majesties Subjects, and the Security of Merchants Goods from Damage: And so often as a Survey is required on any of Their Majesties Ships new or old, or others Hired into their Service, to have such an Allowance with respect to the Burthen of the Ship, and distance of the Place, as shall be settled and agreed unto for a standing Rule, between the Principal Officers and Commissioners of the Navy, and the said Company.

That the Proposals for the quiet Enjoyment of the Launches and Ways before Shipwrights Yards, and that so Universal a Trade as the Shipwrights of England are, may not be Monopolized in the River of Tyne, or any other one River or Port, but that for the Accommodation and Welfare of Navigation in general, the Shipwrights of England, according to the intent of their ancient Charters, should practise their Trade in all Rivers and Ports of England and Wales, is approved of.

That the Reputation of the Shipwrights of England, a Regular Company (as Propos'd) cannot deny, but will either to encourage the Trade, or in Charity relieve their Poor aged and decrepit Members, of which number there are many objects of Pity without Relief, to the great indignity and disjunction of so considerable a Trade and ancient Company as the Shipwrights of England are.

These with other particular heads Propos'd, in order to amend and renew the said Companies Charters, are approved of and Confirmed as aforementioned.

And inasmuch as the former and present Members of the Company of Shipwrights of England, at their great Charge and Pains have pass'd through many difficulties, and at last removed those Obstructions that hindered their being a useful Company: It is undeniable, that the Lives of their Majesties Subjects, Their Majesties Royal Navy and Yard-Service, and the safety of Ships and Merchants Goods, are in a great measure Concerned.

And it is not Unknown that there are several Trades where Mens Lives and Estates be concerned, do for publique Satisfaction and their own safety, advise together and settle General Rules, to direct and Govern themselves, viz. The Company of Chirurgeons, Apothecaries, House-Carpenters, &c.

* It is near 100 Years since these General Rules were settled, and Entered in the Companies Charter: And no particular Person Skill'd Judgment is desired, by observing the Companies General Rules, when properly considered and settled, for the firm and Well-Building and Surveying of Ships, &c.

Whereas the Company of Shipwrights of England, doth hereby give out that the renewing of their Charter to settle their ancient Company, according to his Majesty's most gracious Order in Council, will be of no advantage to them, but will oblige them to pay great Duties of Tonnage and Poundage: Now that the Members of the said Company may not be deceived by such designed false Reports, this is to assure them that their New Charter doth not require or impose any Duty of Tonnage and Poundage, wholly leaves the said Company to agree amongst themselves, and Name when they settle their By-Laws, what small sum they think reasonable for the moderate support of the said Company and Relief of their Poor, either by way of Tonnage and Poundage or any other waies the Major part of the said Company think fitt. //